

Radiological Health Program

Radioactive Materials

Guidance for requesting US DOT Exemption E-10656 upon receiving scrap metal or related re-cycling material that is radioactively contaminated.

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Scrap metal facilities and foundries may have equipment to detect radioactive material or devices that may have unknowingly been included in shipments arriving at the facility. The introduction of such radioactive devices may cause significant economic harm to the business due to clean up cost, lost product, and lost wages. In most cases the facility will refuse these shipments. Rejected shipments that are suspected of containing detectable quantities of radioactive materials are subject to the US Department of Transportation (DOT) Regulations, which require shipping papers describing the radioactive materials, placards on the vehicle, and training for the drivers. The carrier or shipper may request an exemption from these requirements from the DOT; however, DOT approval may take several days during which time the carrier or shipper's trailer or rail car may not be moved creating an economic loss. DOT has determined that public health and safety, including that of the carrier is not adversely impacted as long as the conditions of the exemption are followed.

The Virginia Department of Health's (VDH) Radiological Health Program participates in a program that the Conference of Radiation Program Directors has initiated with DOT to delegate to the States the authority to issue an exemption for specific incidents within their respective jurisdictions. The specific DOT exemption is E-10656. A copy of the exemption is attached to this guidance document and is also available at the following US DOT web site: http://hazmat.dot.gov/exemptions_index.htm.

Facilities that have detected radiation levels above background should contact Radiological Health Program at (804) 786-5932 or instate 1-800-468-0138, and FAX (804) 786-6979 to provide information on the exemption form. If the facility has tele-fax capability, an approval form may be sent the same workday or the next business day if the request is received after 3:00 p.m.

The VDH will follow up with the State Radiation Control Program in the state to which the shipment was returned to determine the nature of the radiation levels. When shipments are returned to Virginia, VDH may either inspect the shipment or require the facility to contract with a qualified consultant to survey the shipment. VDH will provide advice on disposal options, and depending on the nature of the radiation source, provide information regarding the licensure of the material. VDH will assume the material is under its regulatory authority until it has been identified as those materials regulated by the US Nuclear Regulatory Commission.

Attachment: E-10656 Sixth Revision Expiration April 30, 2003
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